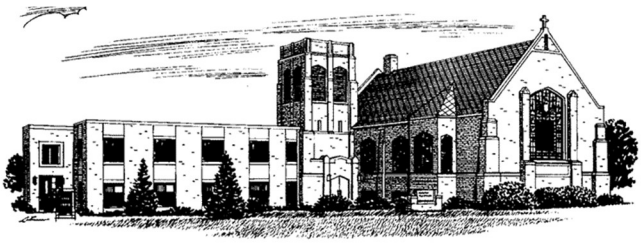
SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085



Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

Saron's Mission: *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!*

The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: oleson@saronlutheran.org

Marcus Roll, Music Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com

Irma Gorman, Organist

Amanda Bradley, Admin Assistant
Cell: 419-306-5780
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
bradley717@gmail.com

Ken Boyd, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org

Sara Porter, Childcare Specialist
Email: portersara20@gmail.com

Joe Ulrey, Saron Congregational Council President
Cell: 313-718-2563
Email: josephulrey@yahoo.com

Typical Sunday at Saron:

Fall, Winter and Spring (through **May 19**):
8:30am Worship On-Location
9:40am Learning Hour for Ages 3-Adult
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available

Summer (begins **May 26**):
10am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

NOTE: Schedule Change This Month!

We hold in prayer:
The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,
Presiding Bishop, ELCA
The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the
North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA
The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI

Our Companion Synods:
Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras
Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea
Lutheran Church of Latvia

PASTOR JOAN'S ARTICLE FOR MAY 2024

Alleluia! Christ is risen. Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia! I love that we celebrate an Easter season and not just a day. Besides being given ample opportunity to shout our "Alleluias" and sing our favorite Easter hymns, of which I have many, we are reminded that Easter is not only about the "big" death and resurrection that we will all experience, but also the little ones that we experience virtually daily. They are the moments of loss, big and little, and the life that endures after those losses, even when that does not seem possible at the time.

This Sunday, April 21, we will be offering a blessing for our new liturgical furnishings and choir robes. I am delighted that we can do this, not as projects finally accomplished, but for the layers of meaning and faithfulness behind the gifts. We give thanks for those who provide ministry to the glory of God, as well as the persons whose memory we hold dear and who have been faithful witnesses to our own lives of faith, and in whose memory the furniture has been purchased. In doing so, we honor the faithfulness of God in our journey, individually and corporately. Blessed be God whose faithfulness endures forever. Amen and Amen. Alleluia and Alleluia!

- Pastor Joan

-- BLOSSOMTIME PARADE --

Join us on **Saturday**, **May 11** for our annual pre-parade picnic, beginning at noon and until we run out of food. This outreach effort is open to our community and of no charge with a free-will offering collected. The street in front of Saron is a fantastic place to watch the parade (and our bathrooms are *definitely* a plus).

General Information

OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Joan
Monday-Thursday Mornings
Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 9am-noon
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:00am-11am (approx)
Ken Boyd (Bookkeeper):
Tuesday Mornings and by Appointment

When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (269/983-1273) or contacting the council president.

Note: Emails for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org to ensure privacy. Emails to Amanda and the church office should be sent to info@saronlutheran.org.

Caring and Sharing

IN OUR PRAYERS

Tom Taylor is at Caretel in St. Joseph;
John Olson is at Woodland Terrace in Bridgman.

Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!

5/2 John Hoodlebrink
5/3 Brooklyn Huff
5/4 Andrew Fortenbacher
5/6 Charlene Baumgartner
5/9 Dennis Lundgren
5/11 Kelli Christman
5/12 Alexander Maly
5/12 Andrew Stankiewicz
5/13 Jenna Henderson
5/15 Kathie Bradley
5/16 Laurie Caple
5/19 Monica Freemire
5/19 Nora Lewis
5/22 Connor Ashley
5/22 Laura Chaddock
5/23 Adam Bradley
5/24 Elliot Hooper
5/25 Matthew Bradley
5/28 Marlene Cox
5/30 Benjamin Frey
5/31 David Bradley

Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!

5/9 Marilyn & Dale Lucy
5/16 Ann & Ted Dosch
5/21 K.T. Alexander & Katie Kroening
5/22 James & Laura Hicks
5/23 Mary Alice & Edward Brunner
5/25 Matthew & Amanda Bradley
5/30 Bob & Mary Kynast

"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

LOOKING AHEAD

Bishop Craig Satterlee will be joining us at Saron's worship on **Sunday, June 16 at 10am**, where he will offer proclamation of the word and a time for conversation.

We are planning to receive new members soon!
Are you interested in becoming a member of Saron or learning more about faith from the Lutheran perspective? If so, let Pastor Joan know by **May 12** so we can plan an informational meeting regarding membership and the Lutheran tradition.

FORTIFY & fly

We met for a brief congregational meeting on April 7 to consider a proposal on painting the sanctuary and narthex (it's been 20+ years). We voted and approved Fortify & Fly funds to be spent on that project. Those plans are still evolving. We also met again with the technology vendor to look at samples and narrow the scope of the project so we can get a more accurate proposal regarding potential lighting upgrades. Trust that we will continue to give you updates until all projects are complete and all the money has been responsibly spent. As always, thank you for being with us on this journey. Happy spring!

Worship

NEW: ASSISTED HEARING DEVICES

Our new sound system in the sanctuary came with headphones to help those having difficulty hearing the worship service. If this may be of benefit to you, ask Marcus if you can try one out.

SENSORY BAGS

As part of extending an unconditional welcome to all, we now have Sensory Bags available for use during worship or at other times when helpful. These bags contain a variety of fidgets that can help someone feel more able to sit quietly and/or focus. We also have noise canceling headphones for those who are sound sensitive. These brightly colored bags can be found in the narthex.

PRAYER GROUP

You are invited to offer your prayer petitions (concerns or thanksgivings) via our attendance cards each Sunday. Requests can also be made confidentially online via a link in our Thursday mailings. You may include as much detail as you wish. Requests are then given to the Monday prayer group. **You are also invited to be part of the Monday group at 11am.** We follow a simple format of morning prayer and insert the petitions and prayers for Saron's ministry and the world. You don't even have to pray aloud, if you would prefer to pray quietly. Most weeks we are done in 30 minutes. If you want to know more about this ministry, please contact Pastor Joan.

ALTAR FLOWERS

Sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by contacting the church office. Please note any occasion/thanksgiving to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Checks are payable to Saron with "Flowers" as the memo. Take them home to enjoy then **simply return the vase to Saron.**

Nursery

Nursery service is available during worship. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For preschoolers that need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex, including clipboards with coloring pages and children's bulletins. **It's vital to embrace family units in all stages and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families. We recognize that may not look the same for all and encourage sharing concerns and suggestions.

We are always looking for additional helpers to share the load. Contact Marilyn Lucy (269/759-3464) with questions or interest.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

May 5: 6th Sunday of Easter
Acts 10:44-48
Psalm 98
1 John 5:1-6
John 15:9-17

May 12: 7th Sunday of Easter
Acts 1:15-17, 21-26
Psalm 1
1 John 5:9-13
John 17:6-19

May 19: Day of Pentecost
Acts 2:1-21
Psalm 104:24-34, 35b
Romans 8:22-27
John 15:26-27; 16:4b-15

May 26: The Holy Trinity
Isaiah 6:1-8
Psalm 29
Romans 8:12-17
John 3:1-17

YOUTH GROUP

Our youth group (middle school and high school kids) had a pool party & taco bar on April 14. We invited some of our younger kiddos too so they know what they have to look forward to once they get a little older.

This group typically meets once per month after the late service for food, fun and fellowship. Friends are always welcome! **Contact Scott at scottgaspari@outlook.com with any questions or to be added to the email list.**

ELCA YOUTH GATHERING

We have less than 3 months until our group leaves for the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans! In the coming months, we will offer two easy ways to support these teens and their adult leaders.

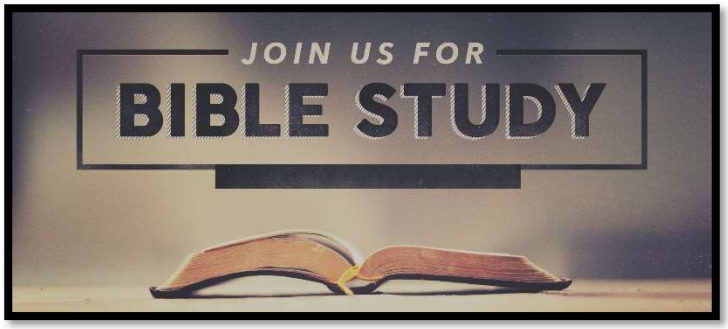
- **Pop Can Drive** – throughout May and June, there will be a collection bin for bags of returnable cans.
- **Envelope Board –** In June, we'll have a display board with various envelopes intended for a specific purpose, such as $10 for snacks or $15 to purchase a lunch. If you would like to help, you simply put the specified amount in the envelope and drop it in the collection box.

We sincerely appreciate the generous support we've already received. As of printing, Mia, Hunter, Alaina and Brooke have $2,451 towards their goal. We ask that you keep these 4 and their leaders in your prayers. We want them to have a safe and meaningful trip, full of new friendships and once-in-a-lifetime experiences!

Learning

Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.

We have many educational options to fit your needs and schedule. Always feel welcome to join us, at any time and for as many sessions as works for you.



SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR

Our program year is underway. We have opportunities for many ages and stages!

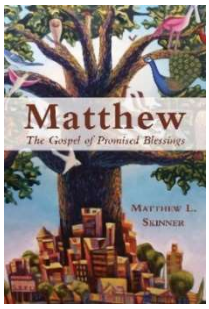
The Sunday Learning Hour (9:40am-10:30am) offers the following options:

- Preschool - Grade 5: Sunday School
- Grades 6-8: Confirmation Classes
- High School - Adult: Adult Forum

THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

We are continuing to work through "Matthew - The Gospel of Promised Blessings" by Matthew Skinner, a professor at Luther Seminary. From Cokesbury:

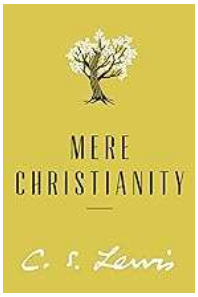
The Gospel of Matthew portrays Jesus and his message as full of tender compassion and urgent warning. This six-part exploration of an enigmatic Gospel takes readers into the themes, topics, and tensions at the heart of Matthew's story about the life and work of Jesus. Chapters focus on blessing and comfort, judgment and retribution, the meaning of discipleship, Jesus' vision for the Church and world, conflicts and complaints, and how the Gospel of Matthew speaks to believers today.



You are encouraged to join us, even for one session, to see what you think. After Memorial Day, we will begin meeting outside (as weather permits) with a focus on the lessons of the week. **This group meets Thursday mornings at 9:30am.** Contact Pastor Joan with any questions.

TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY

We continue our study of the book *Mere Christianity* by C. S. Lewis. Published in 1952, the book is drawn from a collection of BBC radio talks that Lewis gave during World War II. David Vanenburgh will lead the study, which will run 12 weeks.



In *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis argues that there is a fundamental moral law that governs the universe and that Christianity offers the best explanation for this law. It is making for some fascinating and enlightening discussions.

We meet **Tuesday evenings at 6pm** in the upstairs lounge for one hour then adjourn to a local restaurant for food and fellowship. **All are welcome!**

If you have any questions, feel free to call, text, or email:
Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com)
Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com)

Are you planning some summer fun for out-of-town guests or do you just want to 'get away' without going too far from home? Please join us for this year's final two sessions of Forum & Fellowship on May 1 and May 15 at 7pm.

Our topics have generally been a bit 'heavier' lately but it's time to start getting ready for summer so we are lightening it up a bit. We are going to be hearing about things you can do within a day's drive of St. Joseph. We will learn from speakers and we will hear from group members on fun and interesting things to do in our own backyard.

Jill Adams from the Berrien County Parks Department will be our speaker on May 1. We hope to see you there!

Everyone is welcome. Bring your ideas/experiences to share! **Contact Ed Staude at 636/288-1016 with any questions.**

Join us on Sunday, May 5 at 6:30pm in the lounge, for our final session before summer break. The book is *Black Cake* by Charmaine Wilkerson. Two estranged siblings delve into their mother's hidden past and how it connects to her traditional Caribbean black cake recipe. This story and the black cake are meant to be savored. Come and see!

We will also be choosing books for our next session which will begin in August. All are welcome to come and help with this process. The choices will be listed in the June newsletter. If you want to be included on the email list to receive updates and Zoom information about meetings, please contact **Kathy Cowall at 269/428-0354 or kcowall@hotmail.com**.

"It is a lot easier to start the day when I know it will end in a good book."
- Goodwill Librarian

Women of the ELCA

DEBORAH CIRCLE

Deborah Circle will meet on **Wednesday, May 8 at 7pm** in the church lounge. Zoom will be available. A link for that will be emailed close to the meeting date. The study will be from the March/April 2024 issue of Gather magazine titled *Scripture and nature, Teachers of faith, session three: Rivers*, p. 14-19. Mary Alice Brunner will lead the study.

If you have any questions about this group, contact Melanie at 269/449-8399.

ANNUAL WOMEN'S RETREAT

It's not too late to attend the annual Women's Retreat, scheduled for **May 4, 2024 from 9am - 4pm** at the home of Linda Pater. The cost for the day is **$15**, which will include breakfast and a late lunch. This is a wonderful opportunity to renew old friendships and make new ones. There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex. If you have any questions, feel free to call **Linda at 269/369-1178**. Hope to see you there!

Hospitality

SUNDAY SNACKS

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. Please plan for 30 to partake. Thank you!

Outreach

THE BENTON HARBOR
SOUP KITCHEN™
HEART-TO-HEART™

Simple food, honestly sourced and lovingly made creates connections, gives fuel to the fight, and starves ignorance and apathy.
- Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen

On March 28, Saron members Jim Manore, Doug Wold, Mary Zylema & Colleen Lundgren were very busy at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen preparing over 100 lunches for guests. The meal included ham, potato salad, coleslaw, fruit, pickles, bread & homemade cookies. Thanks to our cookie bakers Kathi Anserello & Fran Bolson.

If you are able to help with the preparation and serving, or by providing cookies, please use the link in the weekly email or contact Kathie Bradley at 269-921-4665.

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers.
Joyfully sharing God's love for all!

NOISY OFFERING

ELCA WORLD HUNGER

We receive a noisy offering
(or those not-so-noisy bills)
on the first Sunday of each month.
These gifts are sent to
ELCA World Hunger.

Thank you for your continued support!

EYE GLASS COLLECTION

Lions RECYCLE For Sight

Help Someone With Your Old Eye Glasses!
Do you have any old pairs of glasses? Lions Club International has provided a collection box in the narthex. We have several Saron members who are Lions that can deliver our glasses to the club. Consider donating your old glasses to the Lions rather than storing them or throwing them away. Thank you!

INTERFAITH ACTION

Interfaith Action

Interfaith Action (swmichiganinterfaith.org) is a coalition of over 40 faith communities in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Some members of Saron attend meetings and work with various task force groups. One of the goals of Interfaith Action is to promote understanding and respect for diversity.

The first step in getting involved, is getting informed. Register to receive their communications at https://swmichinterfaith.org/contact1

INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.

If you ever have any questions or need clarification on our inclusivity journey, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:

Connor Ashley: cashley1837@outlook.com
Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Laura Hicks: 517/930-0579 or lhicks42@gmail.com
Darlene Kiessel: 269/313-4062 or kiessel@me.com
Pr Joan Oleson: 269/983-1273 or oleson@saronlutheran.org
Lindsay Gaspari: 847/373-8826 or lindsay.gaspari@yahoo.com

Support

The Support Committee typically meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 8pm via Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

STOCK DONATIONS

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Joe Ulrey at josephulrey@yahoo.com to receive more information. Thanks!

Facilities

HELPING HANDS (Previously Golden Hammers)

We do all sorts of things from building maintenance to preps for worship in the sanctuary to assembling bulletins and newsletters and so much more. We meet on Wednesdays around 9am and know you are invited – whatever your age, gender, or ability. There is a job for you to use your helping hands.

SPRING CLEAN-UP

We appreciate all who came to the official Spring Cleanup on April 20 but also the individuals that started raking and picking up sticks in the weeks prior so we were ready for the kiddos to run around for the Easter Egg Hunt.

Other Bits of News

BURIAL PLOTS AVAILABLE

Are you, or someone you love, in need of a burial plot? Saron has been gifted with two adult plots, which can be divided, at **North Shore Memory Garden in Coloma**, as well as a niche for two end-to-end caskets in the Mausoleum. We are offering these at a reduced current value with proceeds going to the Endowment Fund. If interested, or you have questions, contact **Liz Kunkel (269/429-1132) or Pastor.**

ZOOM COFFEE HOUR

We will continue the Wednesday Zoom Coffee Hour at 11am as long as there is interest. The link is sent out each Tuesday afternoon. All are welcome, for a few minutes or the whole hour!

FACEBOOK

We often share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page. We do not put names with the pictures. If you have questions or concerns, please contact Pastor.

In 2025, Saron will celebrate our 150th anniversary! This will be a big deal and a huge undertaking, with events throughout that whole year. The committee has been working on preliminary planning and has established an important date for your calendar.

- August 10, 2025 -

We will have a celebratory worship with Bishop Craig Satterlee at 10am, followed by a dinner at Union & Social, a beautiful venue in St. Joseph. More details to come in the future but keep this date open during your travel planning for next year!

Witnessing to Christ and Love for Neighbor in an Election Year

Join the Rev. Amy E. Reumann, ELCA Witness in Society Senior Director, for a six-week study on civic engagement intersections and opportunities in our faith journey!

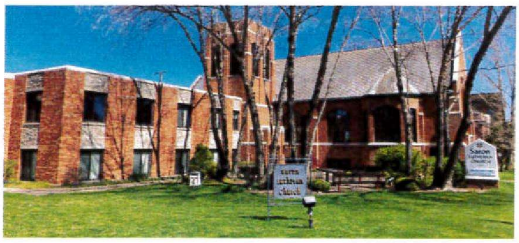
Tuesdays starting September 3, 2024

Class is via Zoom

To learn more and register, go to https://www.mittensynod.org/events/adult-theological-education/

May Corner of Cuteness

As distributed via email/mail on April 15, 2024:



SARON EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH

510 Main Street, Saint Joseph, Michigan 49085
(269) 983-1273; info@saronlutheran.org
www.saronlutheran.org

The Rev. Joan E. Oleson
oleson@saronlutheran.org

"The desert will sing and shout for joy; it will be as beautiful as the fields of Carmel and Sharon." *Isaiah 35:2(NEB)*

April 15, 2024

Dear friends,

For everything there is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven. Ecclesiastes 3:1

It is with great joy and deep humility that I have served with you in Saron's ministry of *"joyfully sharing God's love for all!!!"* For nearly seventeen years we have worked to faithfully worship, learn, and serve together with the help of the Holy Spirit. We have accomplished much and at times have fallen short, at which times we have sought and extended forgiveness. We have cared for one another, challenged, and encouraged each other, and always have sought to remain faithful to our calling as God's beloved people.

I now find it the time to live into a new calling, a new season. For you it will be a season of transition to the calling of a new pastor. For me, it is a calling to the season of retirement. With this letter I announce my resignation as your pastor effective July 31, 2024. My last Sunday will be July 28. Even as I am excited about the possibilities of spending more time with family and grandkids, sitting with a book, or volunteering and potential travel, I do so with the sadness of how our relationship will change. While Jim and I will, at least for the near future, remain in the area, we will be transferring our membership to another congregation, and I will not be available for any pastoral roles with the Saron community. Please, if we see each other, do not avoid a conversation. We simply will not talk about church.

Know that I care about each of you and I trust we will hold each other in prayer. I join the apostle Paul in writing, *"I thank my God for every remembrance of you, always in every one of my prayers for all of you, praying with joy for your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now."* Philippians 1:3-4

In Christ,

Pastor Joan

Joan E. Oleson, Pastor

C: The Rev. Dr. Craig A. Satterlee, Bishop

NOTE: As we enter a new season of Saron's ministry and a time of pastoral transition, know that the Saron Church Council is working with the bishop's office for guidance with the process and next steps. Details will be shared as we receive them. At this time, any questions can be directed to Joe Ulrey, Saron's Congregational Council President.

SARON SENIORS

Preston Akers

Preston is graduating from Lakeshore High School and will be attending Lake Michigan College as part of an electrical apprenticeship program with a local automation company.

Brooke Henderson

Brooke is graduating from Bridgman High School and will be attending Lake Michigan College for Culinary Management.

Elias Coar

Elias is graduating from St Joseph High School and will be heading to Northern Michigan University to study Exercise Science and Nutrition. He was awarded a full tuition National Army ROTC scholarship and will therefore also minor in Military Science to prepare to serve as an officer in the US Army.

Mattias Streufert-Wold

Mattias is graduating from St Joseph High School and will be attending the University of Northwestern Ohio in the fall.

MAY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Forum & Fellowship	**2** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal	**3**	**4** 9am Women's Retreat
5 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am Worship with Choir & Zoom Option	**6** 11am Prayer Group	**7** 6pm Bible Study	**8** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Deborah Circle	**9** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal	**10**	**11** **Synod Assembly (Zoom)** **Blossomtime Picnic**
12 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am **Blessing of Graduates** Worship with Choir & Zoom Option	**13** 11am Prayer Group	**14** 6pm Bible Study 8pm Support Meeting	**15** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee 7pm Forum & Fellowship	**16** 9:30am Bible Study 6pm Bells Rehearsal 7pm Choir Rehearsal **NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE**	**17**	**18**
19 8:30am Worship 9:40am Learning Hour 11am **Confirmation** Worship with Choir & Zoom Option	**20** 11am Prayer Group 7pm Council Meeting	**21** 6pm Bible Study	**22** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee	**23** 9:30am Bible Study **Soup Kitchen Day**	**24**	**25**
26 **SCHEDULE CHANGE!** 10pm Worship with Zoom Option NO Learning Hour	**27** 11am Prayer Group	**28** 6pm Bible Study	**29** 9am Helping Hands 11am Zoom Coffee Pastor On Vacation →	**30** 9:30am Bible Study	**31**	→ Returning 6/12

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

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